

(Draft – Awaiting Formal Approval)

**MINUTES OF THE  
EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, July 17, 2013 – 9:00 a.m. – Room 30 House Building

**Members Present:**

Sen. Stuart C. Reid, Senate Chair  
Rep. Francis D. Gibson, House Chair  
Sen. Patricia W. Jones  
Sen. Mark B. Madsen  
Sen. Howard A. Stephenson  
Sen. Jerry W. Stevenson  
Rep. Patrice M. Arent  
Rep. Rich Cunningham  
Rep. Rebecca P. Edwards  
Rep. Steve Eliason  
Rep. Bradley G. Last  
Rep. David E. Lifferth  
Rep. Daniel McCay  
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss  
Rep. Jim Nielson  
Rep. Val L. Peterson

Rep. Marie H. Poulson  
Rep. Dean Sanpei  
Rep. V. Lowry Snow  
Rep. Keven J. Stratton

**Members Absent:**

Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart  
Rep. Gregory H. Hughes

**Staff Present:**

Ms. Allison M. Nicholson, Policy Analyst  
Ms. Constance C. Steffen, Policy Analyst  
Ms. Angela Oakes Stallings, Associate General Counsel  
Ms. Debra Hale, Legislative Secretary

**Note:** A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at [www.le.utah.gov](http://www.le.utah.gov).

**1. Committee Business**

Chair Reid called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

**MOTION:** Sen. Reid moved to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2013, meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Madsen, Sen. Stephenson, Rep. Last, and Rep. McCay were absent for the vote.

Ms. Nicholson distributed a handout, "CRT Data – What have we learned and where do we go from here?" which displays agenda and date options for a combined meeting of the Utah State Board of Education and the Education Interim Committee.

**2. Public Education System Goals and Objectives**

Ms. Debra Roberts, Chair, Utah State Board of Education, reviewed a visual presentation, "Promises to Keep—A Vision and Mission," which describes the responsibilities of the board. She reviewed the vision and mission of the public education system, challenges in achieving the vision and mission, actions and progress towards implementing a long-term strategic plan, and the goals of the Governor's Education Excellence Commission.

Ms. Roberts distributed a handout, "Promises to Keep Strategic Plan," which identifies the following objectives of a long-term strategic plan:

- 1) ensure literacy and numeracy;
- 2) provide high quality instruction;
- 3) establish curriculum with high standards and relevance; and
- 4) conduct effective assessments of high quality instruction and accountability.

Dr. Martell Menlove, State Superintendent, continued with the visual presentation, describing the funds, resources, and support needed to achieve the mission of the public education system.

### **3. Perspective of Teachers**

Ms. Jennifer Jacobson, grade 11 and 12 lead teacher, Horizonte Instruction and Training Center, Salt Lake District, stressed the fact that effective teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their students and requested that the committee involve teachers in decision making and seek their expertise. She said she appreciates funding for programs that apply to the school's specific demographics and allow local control of classrooms. Since inconsistencies detract from the long-term process of planning and implementation, Ms. Jacobson urged the Legislature to refrain from a frequent change of programs and policies. She stressed the need for funding to reduce class size and provide adequate funding for mentoring and professional development for new programs, and she said that resources should be aligned to support learning.

Ms. Kim Knettles, grade 3 teacher, Edison Elementary School, Salt Lake City School District, stated that high student achievement is directly related to highly effective teachers with knowledge and effective delivery of educational content. She stressed that teachers need to clearly state standards requiring critical thinking with the belief that all students can meet the standards, be adaptive, and gain new skills with teachers providing the resources to help them do so.

Ms. Knettles listed the needs of teachers:

- 1) support from stakeholders;
- 2) learner-centered resources;
- 3) time for students, especially language-learner students, to develop deep conceptual knowledge of content; and
- 4) time for teachers to collaborate and discuss the needs of students.

She suggested that the school day and the school year be extended and also requested that the Legislature not change curriculum so often, since time is needed for the teachers to implement the curriculum changes and for the students to learn them.

Ms. Katie Hipple, math teacher, Northwest Middle School, Salt Lake City School District, said she teaches Grade 7 math and that the majority of her students speak different languages at home. She stated that the school had been functioning under a school improvement grant until June 2013, which provided grants and teacher incentives and resulted in huge gains in student achievement. She discussed classroom challenges of low reading comprehension and low content vocabulary understanding.

Ms. Hipple stated that effective teachers:

- 1) use Common Core standards effectively;
- 2) get to know students and adapt math concepts to their needs;
- 3) use data in collaboration with other teachers; and
- 4) develop a school culture that provides incentives to promote high expectations of students.

She suggested that the Legislature use available data to hold teachers accountable and work with them in making necessary changes and improvements.

Ms. Sara Hacken, U.S. history and English teacher, Lakeridge Junior High School, Alpine School District, and the 2013 Utah Teacher of the Year, described the challenge of engaging English language

learners and low-income families. She said that many of them have no computers, and some do not even have library cards, because parents do not understand the system. She said that the English language learner ratio in her classrooms was 20% but is now 50%. She implored the Legislature to not tie teachers' salaries to student achievement, since teachers cannot control factors such as English language learners, low income, and parental attitude.

Ms. Hacken described a successful program that gives teachers flex time each day to provide students with a daily report card. If a student has a bad grade, she said, the student has to go to intervention and work on that subject with a teacher the very next day. She informed the committee that graduating from junior high with passing grades highly increases a student's chances of graduating from high school. She said that her school employs trackers to make sure students are where they need to be.

Ms. Kim Bayles, grade 1 teacher, Gerald Wright Elementary School, Granite School District, stated that there are thirteen languages spoken in her classroom. She asked that the Legislature invest in:

- 1) providing teachers with support, resources, trust, and latitude to teach with their own style;
- 2) class-size reduction, which vastly affects student achievement;
- 3) helping teachers manage kids with behavioral problems; and
- 4) giving teachers more time to prepare for classroom instruction.

She said that she has parents who lack the social capital to navigate rules, and teachers need time to help them. Ms. Bayles concluded by emphasizing that changing programs and curriculum often is difficult and time-consuming for teachers.

Mr. Dan Rozanas, psychology and philosophy teacher, Alta High School, Canyons School District, reviewed the elements that contribute to high student achievement. He stressed that teachers are overwhelmed and that it is physically impossible to do their jobs at the level they desire. He asked that the Legislature:

- 1) utilize scientifically valid research to make educational policy decisions;
- 2) give educators the autonomy and resources to make professional judgment; and
- 3) provide legislative and teacher dialogue and collaboration.

Ms. Mary Ward, English/English as a second language teacher, Granger High School, Granite School District, listed the needs of teachers:

- 1) research-based standards;
- 2) low class size of about 25, which is vital to connect with students and teach them how to learn and comprehend;
- 3) limited standardized testing; and
- 4) more time to do their jobs well.

Ms. Jennifer Gravier, English teacher, Sand Ridge Junior High School, Weber School District, said that time is a teacher's biggest challenge, and stress levels are tremendous. She listed some of education's challenges and needs:

- 1) cannot attract quality teachers with low salaries;
- 2) children cannot learn when they come to school hungry;
- 3) more time to prepare;

- 4) more time to teach;
- 5) more time for teacher collaboration and professional development;
- 6) money for literacy coaches in secondary schools, and
- 6) legislators who work with teachers.

Ms. Brandy Valdez, kindergarten teacher, Franklin Elementary School, Salt Lake City School District, stressed that the key component to student success is quality teachers. She believes all students can learn and that teachers need to set high expectations for their students and have the time to effectively teach them. She suggested that legislators, administrators, and teachers continue collaborating to be on the same page.

Dr. Tim Jones, math and science chair, American Preparatory Academy, said that quality teachers need to love their students, have high expectations of them, and believe they can learn. He said teachers need content knowledge. Dr. Jones stated that his biggest challenge is the wide variation of skills of his students and sees the solution as setting class size based on the skill set of the students. He requested that the committee not dictate how to teach students or solve other educational challenges, but to set the standards for teachers to reach and hold them accountable.

Sen. Reid requested all presenters to bullet-point their suggestions and provide them to committee staff.

Rep. Stratton asked the teachers to state one concern and one positive aspect of the Common Core. The teachers expressed concern that Utah students may not be prepared for the more challenging curriculum of the Common Core. On the other hand, they stated that the Common Core will require students to dig deeper and demonstrate the knowledge needed to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The teachers and the committee discussed 2012 General Session S.B. 64, "Public Education Employment Reform," and the teachers restated their conviction that if the committee continues to collaborate with them, education will continue to move in the right direction. They also requested feedback as to what legislators want Utah teachers to do better. They added that fellow teacher evaluations are also beneficial, since effective teachers are the best resources for other teachers to improve.

#### **4. Annual Report - Capital Outlay Increment Spending**

This agenda item was not addressed.

#### **5. Other Items/Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Rep. Peterson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Stevenson, Rep. Eliason, Rep. Lifferth, and Rep. Sanpei were absent for the vote.

Chair Gibson adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.